yet another Proto-Indo-European case, the instrumental. The real challenge on this account is the Greek genitive absolute: at first sight the least exciting of the three constructions, the Greek genitive absolute turns out to have travelled furthest from its Proto-Indo-European origins. Some details will be worth debating, but the value of Ruppel's work lies not least in challenging preconceptions that may be based too readily on Greek or classical Latin.

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VIERROS (M.) **Bilingual Notaries in Hellenistic Egypt: A Study of Greek as a Second Language** (Collectanea Hellenistica 5). Brussels: Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie van België voor Wetenschappen en Kunsten, 2012. Pp. 291. €19.50. 9789065691033.
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Although multilingualism and cultural interaction in Hellenistic Egypt have long attracted scholarly interest, the challenges of the sources and the relative scarcity of those working on both Greek and Egyptian material mean that the linguistic details of Greek-Egyptian bilingualism remain largely unexplored. Vierros' study of language use among bilingual *agoranomoi* (public notaries) in Ptolemaic Egypt therefore comes as a significant addition to the field. The core of the book is an analysis of the Greek in the surviving notarial contracts from Upper Egypt, written by notaries whose first language was Egyptian. Vierros' main thesis is that many of the linguistic idiosyncracies in these documents, previously condemned as 'bad' Greek, in fact reflect consistent patterns and strategies which are explicable in terms of the writers' bilingualism. The technical analysis is embedded within a broader socio-historical treatment, making the book also of relevance to those interested in wider questions of multilingualism and cultural contact.

Part 1 (chapters 2–4) explores the socio-historical and linguistic contexts. The survey of Hellenistic Egypt's linguistic landscape(s) in chapter 2 will be particularly useful for non-specialists and helpfully emphasizes the difficulties of extracting ethnic, cultural and linguistic information from ethnic labels and onomastics. Chapter 3 establishes the local context, with an examination of language use in and around second-century Pathyris. Although a tightening of Ptolemaic control over the area after the Great Theban Revolt led to an increase in Greek documentation, demotic was still widely used; most families with Greek contracts in their archives had blood or marriage ties with *agoranomoi* (62–70). As a qualification to previous scholarship, Vierros persuasively suggests that language choice was sometimes determined by pragmatic rather than cultural considerations: for instance, Greek contracts were used for more valuable transactions, perhaps because of their immediate registration and validity in Greek courts (59–60, 65).

Chapter 4 turns to the notaries themselves, examining the types of document they produced, their working practices and the careers of known *agoranomoi* from the Thebaid. Key here is a discussion of authorship (90–100). Although different hands are found writing under the name of one notary, most documents signed by a particular notary were probably written by him (105). The palaeographical analysis also highlights the richness of the source material, which provides a rare opportunity to study individual linguistic and orthographic practice. Particularly evocative is the case of the 'Hermias hand', whose distinctive features might suggest a left-handed scribe (95–96). A lack of images detracts somewhat from this section.

Part 2 (chapters 5–7) presents a detailed linguistic analysis of the Greek in the 148 surviving agoranomic documents from the Ptolemaic Thebaid, which come for the most part from Pathyris and Krokodilonpolis and date between 174 and 88 BC. In general, the notaries' Greek displays few phonological and morphological irregularities (chapters 5–6), but problems sometimes arise with syntax: two notaries in particular struggled to use Greek cases correctly, which is unsurprising given the lack of morphological case-marking in demotic Egyptian (140–75). However, Vierros shows that their usage is not as chaotic as previously thought and reflects certain patterns: Hermias, for example, often inflects only the first name of a group correctly and puts all the others in the nominative case – so-called 'phrase-initial inflection' (140–43).

Perhaps the most exciting results are in chapter 7, which assesses several syntactic irregularities that are explicable in terms of Egyptian syntax and may therefore represent transfer from the notaries' first language. The strongest case is relative clauses: Vierros argues convincingly that some

notaries' tendency to inflect Greek relative pronouns in the wrong gender and number reflects influence from Egyptian relative clause structures (177–94). The conclusions are followed by four appendices, including helpful document and image concordances.

As Vierros readily acknowledges, with this type of analysis one often comes up against the limits of the evidence. Frequently, no definitive explanation can be given for a particular phenomenon or even for broader patterns. When notaries' orthography meticulously follows the standard, for instance, this could indicate high linguistic competence or that they rarely spoke or heard contemporary Greek (107); one might regard syntactic errors as more suggestive of lower competence, although Vierros attributes Hermias' and Apollonios' more frequent grammatical mistakes to a higher level of bilingualism (175). There is also the question of wider applicability – most of the linguistic idiosyncracies under analysis occur in the Greek of one or two notaries. Yet the book amply demonstrates the rewards of Vierros' approach and it is to be hoped that it will indeed 'further encourage the Greek, demotic and Coptic papyrologists studying Greek and Roman Egypt to combine their knowledge' (229).

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RUIZ DARASSE (C.) and LUJAN (E.R.) *Eds* **Contacts linguistiques dans l'occident méditerranéen antique** (Collection de la Casa de Velázquez 126). Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2011. PP. xii + 312. €37. 9788496-820616.

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Contacts linquistiques dans l'occident méditerranéen antique follows the path of studies on bilinguism opened by J.N. Adams in the early 2000s (J.N. Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*, Cambridge 2003; J.N. Adams, M. Janse and S. Swain (eds), *Bilingualism in Ancient Society. Language Contact and the Written Word*, Oxford 2002). Its aim though is to distance itself from this path and to move forward both on the languages studied and on the methological approach used (for example C. Múrcia's article focuses on the language of the Mauri that has been understudied at the expense of the more popular Punic). The challenges of this field of study are well presented in the book: the scarcity and the fragmentation of the evidence left by ancient languages make it extremely important to work with a carefully designed methodology based on modern linguistics as well as with an interdisciplinary approach (for example J. Velaza Frías, 89 and P. Schrijver, 241–42). One of the strongest points of *contacts linguistiques* is exactly this focus on methology; it is essential to overcome the fact that fragmentary evidence might lead to erroneous conclusions that bear no relation to the social and political contexts in which these languages interacted with each other (M. Bats, 226).

Contacts linguistiques covers mainly the area of the western Mediterranean with articles divided across four geographical areas: the Iberian peninsula; North Africa; the area under Italic influence and southern Gaul; and the eastern Mediterranean. Despite the fact that the focus of the book is on 'regional' languages, these languages reflect the influence that both Greek and Latin had on them. The articles employ very different approaches to the study of the material (they vary from a corpus of bilingual inscriptions to an assessment of changes in spelling); this underlines the fluidity of the linguistic exchanges in antiquity – exchanges brought about by cultural, commercial or political contact.

The articles on the Iberian peninsula show the linguistic complexity of the area, where numerous local languages (Tartessian, Iberian, Vasconic, Celtiberian and Lusitanian) and foreign languages (Phoenician, Greek and Latin) met. F. Beltrán Lloris and M.J. Estarán Tolosa stress how the lack of evidence is a burden and how, because of this, research has mostly focused on the relationship between Latin and the other languages and not on the relations between these languages themselves. This is a point that arises too in Velaza Frías' article on the contact between languages in pre-Roman and Roman Spain. J. de Hoz discusses the Iberian language as a *lingua franca*, which again stresses the need for a methology, and wonders how modern linguistic methology created for spoken languages can be adapted to dead written languages that have left limited evidence. J. Gorrochategui focuses on the linguistic changes in the area of Aquitania with the arrival of Latin and how it influenced the Iberian language. In this context, the challenge is to understand the process because the available written evidence is dated much later than the actual start of the process.